

G. 289

THE

# Flying Serpent

Strange News out of

# ESSEX

BEING

A true Relation of a Monstrous Serpent which  
hath divers times been seen at a Parish called *Hetham* on the Adonst  
within four Miles of *Saffron-Walden*.

Showing the length, proportion, and bigness of  
the Serpent, the place where it commonly lurks, and what means  
have been used to kill it.

Also a discourse of other Serpents, and particu-  
larly of a Cockatrice killed at *Saffron-Walden*.

The truth of the Relation of the Serpent is attested.

*Richard Warden* Warden

*Thomas Fildes* Constable.

*Robert Fildes* Clerk of the Poor.

By

*Thomas Fildes*

*Richard Warden*

*Thomas Fildes*

*Richard Warden*

*Thomas Fildes*

With Allowance.

LONDON, Printed and sold by *Peter Lillieran* in *Clerkenwell*.

THE

FLY

B

A true Relation of the most famous  
and dangerous adventures which  
hath divers times been  
within four or five years  
past, in the West-Indies  
showing the manner how  
the serpents and  
the Indians have  
been employed  
in the service of  
the Spaniards.

Also a discourse  
of the nature and  
properties of the  
serpents and  
the Indians.

By

LONDON Printed and Sold by J. Sturges at the Sign of the Gun in St. Dunstons Church.





## Strange News out of *Essex*,

O. R.

## The Winged Serpent.

**G**uests, Fish, and news grow stale in three days time, and nothing delights an *English* fancy so much as new novelties, for like the *Athenians* we have still itching Ears after News, which once told we soon grow weary of it and hearken after more, being still desirous of that which is new, which makes so many tautologies in the title of Books; some filling them *new news*, whereas if it be news it must needs be new; so also a new Almanack for the Year, 1669. Whereas an Almanack for such a year were as proper, if not properer, or if it be only for that year it can neither be new nor old for any other. But this news which I shall now relate, as it is certain, being attested by many credible persons, so it is also new, the venomous creature being still living enough oftentimes attempted by the inhabitants to be killed.

The place of his abode and where he hath been oftentimes seen, is called *Hebham*, but most commonly *Hebham on the Mount*, the Town standing upon a Hill, having many fair Farms and Granges belonging to it, in one of which named the *Lodge*, near to a Wood called *Birch-Wood*, by reason of the many Birches growing there, in a pasture ground close by the same had this monstrous Serpent been often seen as he hath lain upon the sides of a Bank, heaving and stretching himself out upon the same, stretcht out as *Set* did parch the earth with his fulgent beams.







o that of the Theban Serpent, of which thus the Poet Line  
*Which with a hissing from his Den appears*  
*Amazing both at once the Eyes and ears,*  
*Fire from his threatening eyes like lightning shot*

*And Scyrian blasts exhaled from his dire throat,*  
Not knowing on a sudden what to do, at last it was resolved by them  
that the one should go to the Lodge (which was not far off) to fetch a  
Gun, and the other in the mean time to watch the Serpent, who still  
stood facing them as though he dreaded no danger that could happen  
to him; being as fierce and undaunted as that Serpent of which the  
Divine Du-Bartas giveth us this description.

*The several Snakes that out of Libia's slime*  
*Are bred, they all in him might well combine,*  
*Nor could Medusa's head had all the blood*  
*In one place fallen, produce a deadlier brood;*  
*Whose speckled belly with more spots is deckt*  
*Then various Theban marble is bespckt.*

But whilst the one was thus gone for the Gun, the Serpent as if he  
had waited long enough, folds himself up, and darting forth returns  
to the Wood, making such a rustling noise in the hedge as if some  
wild Boar, or other large Beast had been breaking thorow it.

About 2 days after the same Serpent was seen by another, who gave  
the same description of it with the two former as is above written.

Since which time it hath been seen by divers who have fruitlessly at-  
tempted to kill it; for now upon the sight of a man, it presently betakes  
its self to the Wood, where he remains safe, none daring to come nigh  
it with Clubs, and for their Guns in that place where he can hide him-  
self in Buthes, and Bents, they are altogether useless; yet has there  
been and is still continued to this day, great watching by several  
Persons with Muiquets and Fowling-pieces and such like to shoot it  
but as yet it hath been no Mans good fortune to light on him.

The report of this Serpent is so terrible to the inhabitants thereabout  
that no women, children, nay nor a great many men durst not go near  
the place where he lurks, yet we hear not of any mischief that he hath  
yet done, though it be a wonder to most people on what he subsists,

and that hunger does not compell him to range farther abroad, seeing he wants not for courage, as may be evidenced in his so facing of the two men aforesaid.

We read in ancient Histories of a Serpent in *Tripoli* a Country in *Asia* that was one hundred twenty and five paces in length, he had a mouth so wide, that he could swallow a man on horseback, and each of his Scales were as big as a large shell.

They also tell us of *Hydra*, a monitrous serpent on the Lake of *Lerna* who having one head cut off, immediately had two other Heads grow up in the same place; this Serpent was at last slain by *Hercules*.

*Pliny* tells us of the *Rinocerote* a small Serpent which winds himself about the leg of an *Elephant*, who with his Trunk seeking to rid him, when so-thwith, the Serpent creeps into the Trunk, and so kills the *Elephant*, but long he enjoys not the conquest, for the *Elephant* kills the *Rinocerote* with his fall.

He also tells us of the *Scorpion* a venomous Serpent with 7 feet his sting is in his Tayl; sometimes they eat their young ones, and are of divers colours; the Female is the biggest and hath the sharpest sting. The *Arcadian Scorpion* will not hurt their Countrymen, nor the *Syrian Snakes*, nor *Tyrrhian Serpent*.

We also read of a Serpent named *Amphisbora*, who had a head at both ends, as also of a Serpent called *Boas*, so that biggels, that being found dead, there was a whole Child in his Belly.

The *Asp* is a very venomous Serpent, they always go two and two together, and if one of them be slain, the other will pursue him so eagerly that he slew him; and if a man chance to be bitten by this Serpent it is present death if he cut not off the member so bitten. *Cleopatra* Queen of *Egypt* being taken by *Caesar* applying these Serpents to her body wilfully slew her self.

Nor can we here forget the *Viper*, a most venomous Serpent, the Male hath but one Tooth of each side, the Female more; when they engender, the Male putteth his Head in the Females Mouth, which she biteth off, and their young do gnaw their dams belly, and kill her to get out the sooner.

But of all Serpents, the *Basallisk* or *Cockatrice* is the most venomous.

mons of all other; It breaketh stones, blasteth all Plants with his breath, it burneth every thing it goeth over; no flesh can grow near the place of his abode, it is poison to poison, and frighteth away all other Serpents, only with hissing. If a man touch it though with a long pole it kills him, and if it see a man a far off it destroys him with his looks. It is not above a foot in length, of colour between black and yellow, having very red eyes, a sharp head and a white spot thereon like a Crown. It goeth not winding like other Serpents but upright on his breast. One of these most venomous Serpents in former time lurked about the Meads near *Saffron-Walden* in *Essex*, who by his very sight, killed so many as the Town become almost depopulated, when a valerous Knight making him a Coat of Christal Glass, boldly went to assail this *Cockatrice*, but her venomous Nature not able to indure the purity of that fine mantle, she suddenly dyed in memory whereof his Sword was hung up in *Walden Church*, the effigies of the *Cockatrice* set up in *Brass*, and a Table hanged close by wherein was continued all the story of the adventure; but in these late times of Rebellion, it being taken for a monument of superstition was by the lawless Souldiers broken in peices, to show they were also of a venomous Nature as well as the *Cockatrice*.

We read that in the Reign of King *Edward the third*, Anno 1350. near *Chipping-Norton* in *Oxford-shire*, was found a Serpent having two heads, and two faces like Women, one face attired of the new fashion of Womens attire, the other face like the old attire, and had wings like a bat.

Therefore Serpents in this Kingdom are no new thing, and those far more monstrous and prodigious then this, though this be one of the greatest that we have heard of in this latter age. Nor is there any Countries in the whole World exempted from them, saving only *Creta* or *Candy* an Island of *Greece*, for which now there is so much stir betwixt the *Christians* and *Turks*, and the Country of *Ireland*, which two places do neither breed any venomous Worms, nor hurtful Creatures, nor will any live there if they be brought thither from Forraign Countries.

And to this purpose I shall tell you a story and so draw towards



conclusion. A certain Countryman coming up to London, a friend  
of his shew'd him all the rarities of the City, amongst others one  
was Westminster Hall, which his friend told him was ticked with Irish  
Wood, the Nature of which is such as it would induce no venomous  
Creature might. Ah (said the Countryman) if the fears and bars  
were made of that Wood, the Lawyers must find some other place  
to plead in.

And now for a Corollary to the whole, I shall insert some Verse  
made by an excellent Poet upon a Serpent found near Millam in  
Italy.

The pious Serpent then himself extending,  
His speckled Breast, and slaty main all bending;  
Above his back his ugly odious Tail  
And back with fearful folds does wrigling trail;  
His gazing eyes flashing forth blood and fire  
His hissing mouth his sharp tongue his fench expire;  
With spacious windings rolling on the sand,  
The killer all that cometh near to hand.

### Post script.

Since I am informed by the Neighbours thereof, that they in-  
tend to keep a constant Watch upon it, till such time as they hope to  
kill it.

Therefore serpents in this Kingdom are no new thing, and those  
far more monstrous and prodigious than this, though this be one of  
the greatest that we have heard of in this latter age. For is there any  
Country in the whole World where serpents are so common, as in  
Greece or Italy, and I stand in doubt for which now there is so much  
kill between the Christians and Turks, and the Country of Ireland,  
which two places do neither breed any venomous Worm, nor hurt  
any Creatures nor will any live there if they be brought thither from  
foreign Countries.

And to this purpose I shall tell you a story and to draw towards

ok  
THIS SERPENT is of that Species call'd RATTLE-SNAKES, which scarcely being known in this part of the World, it may not be improper to add to this Advertisement, the Description given of it by Dr. *Horsleman*, in his short History of *America*, viz.

' The RATTLE-SNAKE, says he, is the most surprizing Creature that is found in *America*, if not in the whole Universe; he is so call'd, from his Snake-like Form, and having several thin hollow horny Substances, resembling the Heads of a Row of *Indian Corn*, loosely jointed into each other, growing at the end of his Tail, and encreasing in their Number Yearly, upon the least tremor of which they strike against each other, and rattle together, so as to be heard at a considerable Distance.

' He is a SERPENT full of Courage, Fire, and Spirit, gives way to no Creature living, is easily provoked, and when so, always shakes his Rattles, which if not regarded, so as soon to avoid him, he darts or throws himself swiftly forwards, sometimes the whole Length of his Body, with his Mouth wide open, attempting to bite at whoever affronts him. Whatever Creature he bites immediately dies. He has in his Upper Jaw, four Fangs or curv'd Teeth two of each side; sheath'd, and turn over each other, lying backwards with their Points up close to his Jaw-bone, so that he easily shuts his Mouth, but when he opens it for Mischiefe he unheaths them, and throws them forward, as a Lyon doth his Talons. These Teeth are hollow quite through, very Sharp and opened, a little above quite down to their Points. As if a part had been slop'd off with some Instrument; The Cavities of which are always fill'd with liquid Poison, so that wherever he wounds, some portion of this Venine Matter must be left in each Puncture, which, tho' not the hundredth part of a Drop in Quantity, is of that infinite Force, Subtily and Activity, that as soon as mix'd with the Fluids of the Animal, it instantly affects the whole Body, by causing such a præternatural Ferment and Rarefaction of the Blood, and Juices, so as to burst all the Vessels and overflow the Channels through which they pass, and at once put an entire end to Circulation and Life together.

' And yet the Flesh of these Serpents is often eaten by the *Indians*, and the Fat of them; held in high Esteem among them, and is perhaps the greatest Anodyne upon Earth, and no doubt of it, the very Remedy they cure themselves with when bitten by them.

' Nor is this Creature less wonderful in the Manner of Procuring his Prey, than his Power of Destroying it; for as he chiefly lives upon Birds and small Quadrupedes, so to this end he comes out into some open place near the Woods, draws himself up into a Coil, and in that manner lies, exposing his Body to the Beams of the Sun when in its full Lustre; which being cover'd with smooth shining Scales of a very solid Texture, adorn'd with a large Variety of lively Colours most beautifully dispos'd, reflects the Rays of Light with such Force and Strength, and in such an amazing manner, that Birds that accidentally cast their Eyes upon him are arrested in their Flight, and Squirrels allur'd from the very Tops of Trees, and so suddenly confounded, they hastily draw near to the charming Wonder till they come within his fatal reach.

' In short, so very powerful are the Charms of this most astonishing Creature when thus expos'd that no Human Eye can look stedfastly upon him without being soon ensnared. This I dare venture to affirm, because I have my self, more than once gaz'd at these Creatures in the Sun, 'till I had lost almost all my Reason.